NATION

Rivers of mud flood California

Rains brought down the hillsides, leaving survivors to dig out what's left of their homes. Nearly 20 people are dead, with more than 20 missing. **Page A8**

Mike Eliason / Associated Press

BUSINESS

S.A.'s A'Gaci stores file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy

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SPORTS

Walker back today after months of Lyme disease

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San Antonio Express-News

ExpressNews.com and mySA.com | **Thursday, January 11, 2018** | The voice of South Texas since 1865

AG probes local smuggling case

A dozen migrants were turned loose

By Jason Buch and Josh Baugh
STAFF WRITERS

The Texas attorney general's office is investigating the San Antonio police response to a smuggling incident last month that resulted in 12 undocumented immigrants being released.

In a letter sent Wednesday to Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Police Chief William McManus, City Attorney Andy Segovia and City Manager Sheryl Sculley, Assistant Attorney General Cleve Doty warned the city to "preserve all relevant materials" related to the incident.

"Several citizens have filed complaints with the Texas attorney general's office regarding an incident on Dec. 23 involving the release of numerous suspected illegal aliens," Doty wrote. "The Texas attorney general's office will investigate these complaints, and the procedure in Senate Bill 4 (indicates) litigation."

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick also asked the attorney general to investigate the incident.

"I am very troubled by the recent news reports of the San Antonio police chief releasing suspected illegal immigrants in a case of human trafficking or human smuggling without proper investigation, identification of witnesses, or cooperation with federal authorities," Patrick, who pushed for SB 4 in last year's legislative session, said in a letter to the AG Wednesday night. "Such action could be in direct violation of the recently passed Senate Bill 4 and threatens the safety of citizens and law enforcement."

Under SB 4, parts of which have been blocked by courts, local officials can face fines for

Smuggling continues on A12

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick was among those asking for the incident to be investigated.

Chief William McManus decided to charge the truck's driver under state law.

William Luther / San Antonio Express-News

Huge black piles of tires mark the property at 11150 Applewhite Road that belonged to Safe Tire Disposal Corp.

Tire dump may be at end of the road

New owner already has started removal process

By Scott Huddleston
STAFF WRITER

A massive tire dump described as a "time bomb" because of the health and fire hazard it's posed on the South Side for well over a decade finally may be cleared this year.

Copart, a global online vehicle auction company with corporate offices in Dallas, announced its purchase of the former Safe Tire Disposal Corp. facility at 11150 Applewhite Road, and plans to remove about 1.2 million tires that pose a fire hazard and serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes that can spread the Zika virus and other diseases.

Copart, which operates a neighboring property at 11130 Applewhite Road, will use the dump site's 36 acres to expand its vehicle storage and auction business.

A compliance agreement with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality requires Copart, working with Liberty Tire Recycling LLC of Pittsburgh, to remove all the tires and tire pieces within 300 days. All tire materials are to be taken to "authorized facilities," according to the agreement.

Tires continues on A12

GOP bill links Dreamers with a wall along border

Dems have rejected that

By Kevin Diaz and Bill Lambrecht
WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — As activists fanned out across the Capitol, Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Austin, and other top Republicans unveiled legislation Wednesday that they held out as the starting point for negotiations to protect "Dreamers" — immigrants brought into the country illegally as children.

But the $30 billion GOP plan, coming a day after President Donald Trump called for a "bill of love," hewed closely to Republican priorities that Democrats have rejected, including construction of a border wall.

For the 800,000 Dreamers, or beneficiaries of the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, it would offer three-year renewable legal status allowing them to work, travel and study in the U.S. and abroad.

The bill would not provide Dreamers any special pathways to legal status or citizenship other than those available to other immigrants.

"I see a unique opportunity with DACA to finally get the border secure once and for all,"

Bill continues on A11

Jacquelyn Martin / Associated Press

With Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., looking on, Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Austin, discusses the legislation.

In Business: ICE raids 7-Eleven stores. **B1**

Council to vote today on raising age to buy tobacco

By Peggy O'Hare
STAFF WRITER

San Antonio may become the first city in Texas today to pass a law prohibiting retailers from selling any tobacco products to customers under 21 years old.

State law already forbids the sale of such products to anyone 17 years old or younger. The state measure also prohibits anyone that young from purchasing or possessing those goods. But the City Council is expected to vote this morning on a proposed ordinance that goes further — and puts the onus on business owners to comply.

Supporters say the measure is necessary to protect public health.

Critics say it's heavy-handed government regulation and penalizes businesses, particularly smaller retailers who they fear could be harmed economically.

The proposal, if approved, would take effect Aug. 1, Metropolitan Health District Director Colleen Bridger said. Retailers who violate the rules could face a fine of up to $500.

The drafted ordinance going before the council does not seek any penalties or enforcement measures against 18-, 19- or 20-year-olds who purchase, use or possess tobacco products. It only targets retailers.

"I see one of the major roles of government as keeping people safe," Bridger said Wednesday. "We've got Big Tobacco investing billions of dollars every year, trying to get people to use a product that nobody says is anything but dangerous. So we need to intervene."

City Councilman Greg Brockhouse blasted the policy change as government overreach.

Tobacco continues on A6

WEATHER

HIGH **67** LOW **35** Clearing
Full report, C10

TRICENTENNIAL

Edgar Tobin was war hero and aerial pioneer. **Page A7**

Subscriber bonus: See what's new at Vegas' gadget show

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